

Message Text

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ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 HEW-02 ERDA-05 NRC-05

NASA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 NSF-01

ARA-06 EB-07 /056 W

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R 301639Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3269

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SECSTATE ALSO FOR OES; PASS COMMERCE, HEW, ERDA, NRC,
NASA, NIH, NCI

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, GW, OVIP (MATTHOEFER, HANS)

SUBJECT: BIO BACKGROUND FRG RESEARCH MINISTER
MATTHOEFER

REF: BONN 14441

1. SUMMARY: FRG MINISTER FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY
HANS MATTHOEFER BRINGS WITH HIM AN UNUSUALLY VARIED AND
TURBULENT BACKGROUND FOR SOMEONE IN HIS POSITION, WHEN
HE VISITS WASHINGTON OCTOBER 6-8. ADDRESSEE AGENCIES,
WHICH ARE LISTED AMONG MATTHOEFER'S APPOINTMENTS, MAY
FIND FOLLOWING OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST. END SUMMARY

2. MATTHOEFER, WHO CELEBRATED HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY
LAST WEEK, WAS BORN SEPTEMBER 15, 1925 IN BOCHUM, THE
SON OF A STEEL WORKER. AFTER TWO YEARS MILITARY SERVICE
AND A SHORT TENURE AS PRISONER-OF-WAR, HE LEARNED EN-
GLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH AND RUSSIAN, AND WAS ADMITTED TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF FRANKFURT, WHERE HE STUDIED ECONOMICS
AND SOCIOLOGY AND ALSO TOOK AN ACTIVE PART IN THE CAM-
PUS SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY ACTIVITIES. DURING THIS
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PERIOD MATTHOEFER ALSO ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY OF WIS-

CONSIN AT MADISON FOR TWO SEMESTERS. HE HAS EXCELLENT, NEARLY COLLOQUIAL KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH.

3. AFTER RECEIVING HIS DEGREE MATTHOEFER BEGAN WORK WITH THE HUGE IG METALL LABOR UNION ORGANIZATION, WHERE HE CONCENTRATED ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. FROM 1957 TO 1961 HE TOOK SABBATICAL LEAVE TO WORK WITH THE OECD, FIRST IN WASHINGTON AND LATER IN PARIS.

4. SINCE 1961 MATTHOEFER HAS BEEN AN SPD BUNDESTAG MEMBER FROM A FRANKFURT DISTRICT. AT FIRST HE WORKED IN THE BUNDESTAG ECONOMIC AND JUDICIARY COMMITTEES. AT THIS TIME HE CONTINUED HIS LABOR UNION ACTIVITY, AND LED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE AT THE FORD PLANT IN COLOGNE. IN CONJUNCTION WITH UNION AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TIES HE DEVOTED EFFORT ALSO TO LABOR UNION ACTIVITY IN SPAIN, TO THE EXTENT THAT HE APPEARED AS A DEFENSE WITNESS ON OCCASION WHEN UNION ACTIVISTS WERE PUT ON TRIAL IN MADRID. HE HAS MAINTAINED AN INTEREST IN SUPPORTING SPANISH DEMOCRATIC REFORMS.

5. MATTHOEFER RELINQUISHED LABOR UNION ACTIVITY IN 1972 WHEN CHANCELLOR BRANDT NAMED HIM TO BE DEPUTY MINISTER (PARLIAMENTARY STATE SECRETARY) IN THE MINISTRY FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION ("AID" MINISTRY). IN THAT POST MATTHOEFER DEVELOPED A REPUTATION AS ADVOCATE OF SUCH LEFT WING CAUSES AS ALLENDE CHILE AND MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION CONTROL. HE DENIED THAT HE WAS AGAINST MNC'S AS SUCH; RATHER, HE MAINTAINED, "MY PROBLEMS ARE NOT THE MULTIS, MY PROBLEM IS IN INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IN A WORLD WHICH IS BEING DETERMINED BY

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RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY."

6. WHEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT FORMED HIS GOVERNMENT IN MAY 1974 HE SELECTED HIS FRIEND MATTHOEFER AS A CABINET MEMBER. MATTHOEFER HAD BEEN ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE SPD NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN 1973. HIS LEFT-WING VIEWS WERE SEEN AS A COMPLEMENT TO CONSERVATISM IN THE SCHMIDT TEAM. THE FACT THAT MATTHOEFER RECEIVED THE RESEARCH POST WAS SURPRISING IN VIEW OF HIS NON EXTANT SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL BACKGROUND. IN HIS NEW MINISTERIAL ROLE MATTHOEFER HAS CONTINUED TO DISPLAY OCCASIONAL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND CAUSED CONSIDERABLE CONTRO- VERSY IN THE FRG LAST APRIL BY HIS DENOUNCEMENT OF THE POST-ALLENDE CHILEAN REGIME AS A "BAND OF MURDERERS." THE FRANKFURT JUSO (YOUNG SOCIAL DEMOCRATS) NATIONAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORTS SUCH MATTHOEFER LEFT-WING OUTBURSTS.

7. THE REPUTABLE DAILY "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG" HAS DESCRIBED MATTHOEFER AS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO CAN BE CONCILIATORY, ALTHOUGH HE AVOIDS CONCESSIONS THAT SEEM TOO OPPORTUNISTIC. TO OTHERS, SUCH AS THE CONSERVATIVE DAILY "DIE WELT," MATTHOEFER IS BETTER DESCRIBED AS A HIGHLY EMOTIONAL PERSONALITY. THE FRG RESEARCH MINISTER

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HAS TWO FAVORITE HOBBIES: CHESS AND READING. HIS FA- VORITE AUTHOR IS PROUST. HE IS MARRIED AND LIVES IN FRANKFURT.

8. COMMENT: MATTHOEFER CANNOT BE ACCORDED VERY HIGH MARKS IN HIS FIRST FULL YEAR AS MINISTER. HIS LACK OF DEPTH IN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES IS OFTEN APPARENT. THIS REPORTEDLY HAS NEGATIVELY AFFECTED MATTHOEFER'S REPUTATION AMONG SUBORDINATES IN HIS MIN- ISTRY. RATHER, MATTHOEFER SHOULD BE SEEN AS ABOVE ALL A POLITICAL ANIMAL, NOT AFRAID TO MEET A CHALLENGE HEAD- ON. HE WAS A PRINCIPAL FRG CRITIC OF AMERICAN INVOLVE- MENT IN VIETNAM. HE AIMS TO PROTECT TO THE FULLEST THE INTERESTS OF THOSE WHOM HE REPRESENTS; AT PRESENT THAT IS THE FRG SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ESTABLISHMENT,

IN PARTICULAR ITS LARGE WORKING FORCE.
HILLENBRAND

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